



Catholic Charities of Los Angeles, Inc.

The Sage

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Hansen's Disease Program at Brownson House Helps Client

"Juana," a single mother of three, has been a regular client of Catholic Charities' Brownson House Community Services Center in East Los Angeles since 2014. She began suffering from a rare illness, Hansen's Disease, also known as leprosy, when she was 13 years old. Unfortunately, it took several years before her illness was diagnosed and she began medical treatment.

Juana came to San Gabriel Region's Brownson House when the center was implementing the Hansen's Disease Program. She was one of the very first clients to benefit from the program, which provided bill payments, food supplies and an allowance for her basic necessities and medications, on a monthly basis. Juana's health improved significantly, by 80%, with the help of the Hansen's Disease Program and the disability benefits she received from the government.

Today, Juana no longer feels the stigma of her disease and lives a happier, more positive life with her children. She is attending nutrition classes and enjoys the new things she learns at Brownson House. She inspires others with her delicious recipes, shared with a smile. Juana exclaims, "Thank you, Catholic Charities, for restoring the dignity of my person!" ❖

Graduate of The Village Kitchen Opens Own Bakery

Holly Green, a former Good Shepherd Center for Homeless Women & Children's client and graduate of The Village Kitchen (TVK)'s culinary arts program, recently opened her own business, "Middle Sister Bakery," in Athens, Pennsylvania. TVK provides homeless women with marketable skills to enable them to reintroduce themselves into society. TVK is an onsite vocational training program for the residents of Good Shepherd Center. During the three-month program, the women learn to prepare baked goods, salads, soups, and savoury dishes for TVK's dine-in, take-out and catering customers. In addition, they receive training in customer service, kitchen safety and sanitation.

Recently, Holly wrote, in her letter to Sister Anne Tran, Good Shepherd Center's



Holly, a former Good Shepherd Center client, realized her dream.



Holly made a birthday cake for her niece and shipped it to Nebraska.

Director, "I am proud of the work I have done since transitioning out of the TVK program, and I am so grateful to you and Good Shepherd Center's staff. My life is forever changed, and I have all of you to thank for that."

Victor Hinderliter, Good Shepherd Center's Associate Director, says, "It was such a pleasure working with Holly while she was here, and she remains such an amazing success story." The training Holly received not only gifted her with the knowledge and skills to begin her new journey, but also reignited a passion for baking she always had in her life. She is already a quarter booked for the current year with birthday, special occasion and wedding cake orders. Holly even has bookings for 2017. ❖

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Message from the Executive Director, Rev. Monsignor Gregory A. Cox

On any given night in America, there are over 150,000 veterans sleeping on the streets, under freeways, in parks and shelters. The National Coalition for the Homeless research suggests that as many as 400,000 Veterans will experience homelessness during the year, and that over half of these men and women are considered chronically homeless. According to the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority, an agency of the City of Los Angeles, there are 44,359 homeless individuals who sleep on the streets of Los Angeles County every night. Veterans make up 10% of that number. Los Angeles has the nation's largest concentration of homeless veterans.

Individuals who have risked their lives serving our country in the military deserve our attention when they experience difficult times. Not only do they need shelter, food and clothing when they are homeless, but they also need employment to keep them off the streets.

In the United States, more than 66,000 veteran-owned businesses directly provide employment for 815,000 Americans. These businesses generate more than \$14 billion in GDP. According to the Small Business Administration, there are almost 30 million small businesses across the country. Even more impressive is the fact that, according to US Census data, those businesses employ almost 50% of private-sector workers. And, in the last two decades alone, small businesses have created more than 60% of the new jobs around America.

These significant figures do not tell the entire economic story. Economic growth is driven largely by small businesses that are concentrated in cities. Urban centers are more attractive to business owners and employees, and more people are flocking to them than ever. Studies have confirmed that small businesses and entrepreneurship are major components of urban economic growth.

In addition, through organizations like the Institute for Veterans and Military Families (IVMF), society needs to make a concerted effort to open doors to entrepreneurship for veterans, giving them a better understanding of what it takes to start their own successful businesses.

Given the critical role that small businesses play in our economy, the fact that veterans seem heavily pre-disposed towards entrepreneurship, and the reality that millions of veterans call our cities home, where much of the economic power of small businesses is derived, it is vital that policymakers and economic leaders continue to think about veterans as they develop similar programs to incentivize urban small business growth and expansion. When our men and women in service leave the military and come home to our cities, it is vital that we help them with employment opportunities. ❖

Guadalupe Center Hosts Easter Egg Hunt

More than 100 children participated in the 18th Annual Easter Egg Hunt at Catholic Charities' Guadalupe Community Services Center in Canoga Park. In the spirit of community service, two vans, full of the LAPD Cadets from the Topanga Division, helped to organize the event and to oversee the participants in the Easter Egg Hunt.

Along with Easter eggs found, each of the participants received prizes. In addition, a retired teachers' group, from West Los Angeles, Louisville High School, and El Camino High School in Woodland Hills, donated 133 Easter Baskets with candy, crayons, coloring books, stuffed bunnies, and educational materials for the children.

After the two-hour Egg Hunt, parents provided pizza and fruit for more than 150 people.

"It was inspiring to see the smiles on kids' faces and truly heartwarming to hear the giggles and laughter. The center was blessed to be able to offer this event to our neighborhood youth," stated Sandra Yanez, Catholic Charities' San Fernando Regional Director. ❖



LAPD Cadets help with Easter Egg Hunt.

Catholic Charities



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PROCEEDS FROM THIS EVENT FEED,
HOUSE AND ASSIST OUR CLIENTS
WHO ARE POOR AND HOMELESS.

Annual “Footprints” Raises Awareness of Poverty

Catholic Charities’ San Gabriel Region held its annual event, “Footprints: Making Tracks for Neighbors in Need,” at Bishop Amat Memorial High School track in La Puente. This annual walk raised awareness of poverty and homelessness and generated funds to serve those who are disadvantaged and vulnerable in the San Gabriel Valley.

Auxiliary Bishop David O’Connell opened “Footprints” with a prayer for the Jubilee Year of Mercy. The event was a walk-a-thon and more than 426 participants gathered pledges for each lap around the track. “Footprints” featured a tots’ 50-meter dash, raffles, free refreshments, face-painting, mini races, and Zumba. In-N-Out hamburgers were free for the first 150 participants who brought in \$50 in pledge money or donations. They were also available for purchase.

Luke Rivera, an 8th grade student and event volunteer, helped set up chairs, tables and posters on the high school football field. He learned facts about individuals who are in need, while arranging the posters which had stories, photos, and statistics about poverty in the San Gabriel Valley.

Some posters told about Catholic Charities’ clients who were helped throughout the past year with the funds raised in last year’s event. One poster read, “You are walking today for a mother with two children whose husband left them and, within three months,



Luke Rivera, “Footprints” volunteer, learned about poverty in the San Gabriel Valley.



Rozzie, granddaughter of San Gabriel Regional Director, Mary Romero, enjoyed having her face painted at “Footprints.”

they became homeless.” Luke wrote in his essay for his Religion class: “This story really made me think about how quickly our lives can turn around when something bad happens.” It taught him to remember to be grateful for every day that he is given.

Luke believes that it is good for him to give service to others, not only because he helps people, but also because it makes him feel great to support those in need. He looks forward to volunteering at “Footprints” again next year. ❖

Girl Scouts Earn Silver Award for Project

Four 13-year-old Girl Scouts created a joint project for 25 at-risk youth, ages six-11, at Guadalupe Community Services Center in Canoga Park. Most of the children were from low-income families and came to the center to develop self-esteem and self-confidence.

Thanks to the Girl Scouts, the young clients of Guadalupe Center enjoyed recreational games, dramatic arts, sports, public speaking, tie-dying T-shirts for an anti-bullying skit, painting a backdrop for a stage scene, and learning their lines in the script. Moreover, they received healthy snacks and played interactive games about healthy food.

The program culminated with a skit performance, which was attended by the parents.

The Girl Scouts, Allison Angel, Sarah Benjamin, Matti Koenig and Adina Beck, reached their goal of earning the Silver Award with the completion of this project. ❖

DONATE THAT OLD CAR! IT CAN WORK MIRACLES!



Make a difference this spring by donating a vehicle! Your donation will help us to provide services to the poor and vulnerable in our communities. Catholic Charities will arrange to sell your car and the proceeds will help those in need. Call toll free: (855) 370-4483 or visit <http://catholiccharitiesla.org/how-you-can-help/donate-a-vehicle/>.

These Gifts Make Giving Easier

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It's easier than you think to make a gift that makes a difference. We'll be happy to give you details.

Just contact Alexandria (Sandi) Arnold, at sarnold@ccharities.org or at (213) 251-3495.

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Elizabeth Ann Seton Residence Provides Family with Shelter

“Christina and Andres Serrano” and their two children were accepted into Elizabeth Ann Seton Residence, in the San Pedro Region of Catholic Charities, after they were found sleeping on the beach. Two months earlier, the family had relocated to Long Beach from Arizona after Andres believed he was hired through a Long Beach trucking company. The job was a scam.

Andres had been doing odd jobs to make sure that he could afford a motel room for his family every night. Unfortunately, his income was not enough and the Serranos continuously lived on the beach.

At Elizabeth Ann Seton Residence, they were not only given a safe place to sleep, but also a chance to get their lives back together. Christina took parenting and life skills classes while the children attended school. Andres enrolled into an elite trucking school to obtain his license for the state of California.

Later, Christina and Andres were given a housing voucher, through the Los Angeles County Section 8, which helped them to rent a three bedroom house in Los Angeles. Now,



Photo: Catholic Charities USA

Andres is leasing a truck and driving out of state three days per week, doing pickups across the country. Christina is enrolled in online classes, working to obtain a degree.

Andres said, “I am grateful for the change and growth that the shelter program provided for my family. We were placed in an environment that made us feel comfortable, but Catholic Charities’ staff still encouraged us to succeed.” ❀



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Photo: Catholic Charities USA

Last year, Catholic Charities of Los Angeles, Inc. provided emergency and transitional shelter and homeless services to more than 2,900 individuals.

